

Paul's Passion and Preaching - Part 5

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of passion, weakness, and suffering in preaching and living out the Christian faith authentically.

Duration: 8:08

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 1:29

Topics: "Personal Revival", "Suffering For Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for personal revival and genuine passion in preaching the Gospel. It explores the example of Paul's humility and dependence on God's grace, highlighting the paradox of finding strength in weakness and taking pleasure in difficulties for the sake of Christ. The message encourages believers to live out the principles of the Kingdom of God on earth and be willing to suffer for the name of Christ.

Transcript

Study as much as you can. I preached a sermon last Friday night, I preached for 50 years, preached it all over the world. But it has to be reborn in me, otherwise it does no good.

I've got to go in that with a fire in my, not in my belly, but in my heart. If I don't burn, why should you burn? If I don't weep, why should you weep? If I'm not willing to pay the price, why should I ask you? The last thing I want to be is a hypocrite anyhow. But look at this strange man.

Let's, we've talked about his purpose, we've talked about his passion, let's talk about his pleasure. In 2 Corinthians 12, where is that? Here somewhere. Did he get ahead of me? Is it 2 Corinthians 12, 9 and 10? Oh, I've got the wrong chapter, I must have.

We talked about his, what? His purpose is to preach, talked about his passion, being a debtor to everybody. We talk about his pleasure. Of course he had pleasure.

See if you'd like it. In verse 9, 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9, he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in what? You know, when somebody asks that marvelous man that broke open China, Hudson Taylor, why did God take you of all the people? There are thousands of people at Keswick Convention, other conventions in England. Thousands of great Bible expositors.

Why did he take you? And he smiled, he said, friend, you know what? God had been looking years for a man weak enough to acknowledge his weakness and his nothingness and cast himself on God. And then he took me and used me. And he founded the empire of Jesus in China.

Well, doesn't the scripture say, it's the lame that take the prey. You see somebody limping, you wouldn't think they were much good. God says, the lame take the prey.

And to those who have no might, he increases strength. But the next part is my joy here. Most gladly therefore, he says, I would rather glory in my infirmities.

Come on. We go in the healing line. Some people would never have done the things they've done if God had healed them.

They survived. I've been healed many times. I thank God for it.

I've been in the valley of the shadow of death two or three times. God raised me up. They threw a white sheet over me in hospital and said, it'll be gone in four minutes.

I knocked the sheet away and said, oh, I didn't know you were listening. I said, well, you happen to be talking about me. So I said, I'm not going to die.

I jumped out that burning hotel before I hit the ground. The Lord said, I shall not die, but live. Four o'clock in the morning, the doctor chose at the bottom of my bed scared and white.

And I was all blood and smoke after the fire. And I said, I've got another promise. What is it? First was, I shall not die, but live.

And the second was, ask for God. His ways are perfect. So the greatest preachers in America came to see me, precious guys.

I'm going through this town. I wanted to see you. Amazing how many of them, one of the most outstanding broadcasting preachers in America that day looked at me.

I preached in his tabernacle some months before. He said, Brother God couldn't trust me with this. Did you ever think when you're going through the hottest, toughest spot in your life, he's trusting you? He's not trying to find out what's in you.

He knows. You don't know what's in you. You make your vows.

I'll do this. I'll do that. I'll do the other.

How many of us have come to conferences? From this day, I'm going to pray two hours a day. From this day, I'm going to do that. From this day, I'm going to do that.

Good Lord, the highway of Christian living is covered with a wreckage of vows that have never been kept. But it gets better. He says, I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Again, he's not asking for miracles. He's asking for the indwelling spirit of God to become more intense, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure.

Come on now. What do you take pleasure in, dominoes or golf or what? I take pleasure. I drink of the cup he passed, and I never ask why.

I don't think Paul in his life ever asked why. When he was smitten down on the Damascus Road, he didn't say why, he said what. What's it all about, Lord? Tell me.

Lay the price down. Tell me. He says, therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, necessities, and persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I'm weak, then am I strong. Isn't that a paradox? Well, the whole Christian truth is a paradox. He says, if you want to go up, go down.

If you go up, he'll humble you. If you go down, he'll exalt you. If you want something, be nothing.

Exchange your weakness for his strength, your emptiness for his fullness, that Christ may be magnified. I love that. Look at verse 27 in the first chapter.

This is a pattern he offers to the Philippians, a pattern. We're staying with that letter P, we talked about this, all the other things anyhow. Verse 27, only let your conversation, but that is not speaking.

The word there is citizenship. Remember elsewhere he says, our citizenship is in heaven, but it says in the Authorized Version, our conversation is in heaven. I like what Paul's been saying.

I don't know how much you've heard of what he said, but what he said, we ought to live on earth as though we're already in heaven. The principles of the Holy Kingdom should be operating in us now in this flesh. I read today of a missionary to the Buddhists, and a lovely little boy came.

I remember seeing some of them in some country, Bangkok. Little boys in yellow robes, their hair all shaved off. This little fellow came up to the new missionary and said, you're a new missionary? He said, yes.

You were going to talk about that lovely man Jesus that healed people, and he was kind, and he said you're not to do evil things, and he said you're to be pure in heart, and he said you love your enemies, and so on. Yes, yes. He said, well, sir, that's very nice, but there've been lots of missionaries here that talk about him, but I've never seen anybody like him.

It rocked the missionary back on his heels. Am I just here to tell him, go that way, don't do this, don't do that, fear this, fear the other? He said, immediately I realized I'm there to be a role model for that child. He's going to watch me, and I don't want to betray my Lord by some stupid thing, my flesh getting in, my desires getting in.

So in verse 27, I say this is a pattern. Only let your style of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. Whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in the spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And then he says, and this is our privilege. Unto it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his namesake.

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